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February 29, 2016

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Cynthia A. Harding, M.P.H.  
Interim Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cynthia A. Harding".

SUBJECT: **FOOD FACILITY GRADING SYSTEM  
(ITEM NO. 64-A, AGENDA OF JUNE 9, 2015 AND ITEM 59-A, AGENDA  
OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2015)**

In a motion by Supervisor Antonovich on June 9, 2015, the Department of Public Health (DPH) was directed to (1) conduct a thorough review of the retail food facility grading system in Los Angeles County, including an assessment of current grading factors, methodology, and a review of grading systems used in other jurisdictions and (2) provide a report of its findings and recommendations to the Board within 30 days. Reports were provided to the Board on July 8, 2015 and on August 18, 2015. In a subsequent motion by Supervisor Antonovich on September 1, 2015, DPH was instructed to provide monthly progress reports to the Board on the restaurant grading recommendation implementation activities. This February 2016 report is the sixth progress report in response to the motion.

The Implementation Plan for Restaurant Grading Recommendations, which was developed to report on the progress or status of each recommendation, was updated for this report (Attachment A). Two recommendations have been completed. The target dates for some of the more complex recommendations were adjusted to allow time for additional discussion with stakeholders, and also sufficient processing of policy changes.

DPH is currently scheduling the final round of meetings with the California Restaurant Association (CRA) and the Food Safety Advisory Council (FSAC) members to discuss Recommendation B2, which would preclude the issuance of an "A" grade if two major violations are found, and Recommendation D4, which would modify the owner-initiated

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process for restaurant operators who have chronic unsafe food practices. After these meetings are held, DPH will make a final determination on these recommendations.

Since last month's report, DPH has made significant progress on Recommendation A3, which would add information to the grade card based on stakeholder input. DPH has determined that grade cards going forward will include the date of inspection, the inspector's initials, and a Quick Response (QR) code. The QR code will allow the public to access the last and prior inspection reports online. In an effort to reduce the cost of issuing a new grade card after each inspection, DPH will revise the inspection grade card to allow the entry of a few inspection dates on the card should the grade remain the same.

Our next report will be submitted in March 2016. In the meantime, if you have any questions or need additional information, please let us know.

CAH:dc  
PH:1508:006

Attachment

c: Chief Executive Officer  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

Implementation Plan for Restaurant Grading Recommendations - Status Report of 02-29-16

A. AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC INFORMATION	Target Date	STATUS
<p>RECOMMENDATION A1: EH should ensure that all restaurant closures, whether resulting from routine inspections or public complaints, are made publicly available on the EH website.</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>As of 10/21/15, all restaurant closures, including those as a result of a complaint, are now posted on the EH website.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION A2: EH believes that when a comprehensive foodborne illness investigation is conducted and it is determined that the outbreak is "associated" with the restaurant, this information should be disclosed as well. Additionally, EH will confer with County Counsel, Acute Communicable Disease Control, and Community Health Services to consider appropriate criteria for public disclosure of foodborne illnesses which are potentially associated with a particular restaurant.</p>	<p>4/1/2016</p>	<p>In progress. The California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health workgroup met on February 25, 2016, to discuss this recommendation. A draft recommendation is expected to be issued in the upcoming weeks.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION A3: EH will seek input from the public to determine what additional information should be included on the grade card. The public will be given the opportunity to provide input through an online survey and suggestion boxes at local district offices.</p>	<p>5/15/2016</p>	<p>In progress. DPH has made a final determination to include, in the revised grade card, the date of inspection, the inspector's initials, and a Quick Response (QR) code for the public to access the last and prior inspection reports online. To minimize the cost of issuing a new grade card after each inspection, DPH will add 4 lines at the bottom of the grade card for inspectors to provide the inspection date and their initials should the grade remain the same. The target date was changed to allow time for the formatting and ordering of the revised grade cards, and the distribution to the district offices.</p>
B. METHODS OF SCORING AND GRADING	Target Date	STATUS
<p>RECOMMENDATION B1: Because the County of Los Angeles grading system is well-recognized and valued by the public, DPH recommends continuing with the A,B,C grading, but working to improve the rating method on which the grades are based.</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>DPH will keep the current A, B, C grading system and will make improvements as referenced under Recommendations A3 and B2.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION B2: EH proposes changes to the point value deductions in the inspection report to preclude the issuance of an "A" grade if, upon inspection, the facility is ordered closed or is found to have two major violations.</p>	<p>5/30/2016</p>	<p>In progress. This recommendation will be discussed further with the Food Safety Advisory Council (FSAC) on March 16, 2016. A meeting with representatives of the California Restaurant Association (CRA) to discuss this recommendation further is pending confirmation of the proposed date. A meeting with Environmental Health Directors of surrounding counties is scheduled for February 29, 2016, to continue discussions on this recommendation. After these meetings, DPH will make a final determination. The target date for completion was adjusted to allow time for the additional discussion.</p>

ATTACHMENT A

C. OPTIMIZE INSPECTIONS THROUGH GREATER USE OF DATA	Target Date	STATUS
<p>RECOMMENDATION C1: EH should conduct trend analyses of EC inspection data to develop informational material on food handling practices and behaviors targeting restaurant operators.</p>	<p>5/30/2016</p>	<p>In progress. As a result of the trend analysis and the informational materials prepared in response to this recommendation, DPH has developed a pilot program to partner with corporate offices on food safety. This pilot program, Partnering for Food Safety, targets major retail restaurant chains with multiple locations in Los Angeles County to improve their food handlers' and managers' awareness of food safety practices and behaviors. In the pilot program, the two most frequently observed violations over a two year period are identified; a field evaluation of the business process, focusing on the two violations, is offered; and training and/or informational materials are provided. Then, inspection data is assessed periodically to determine the effectiveness of the support provided in lowering the frequency of the identified violations during subsequent inspections. The target date for completion was adjusted to allow time for implementation of the pilot program.</p>
D. CHANGES IN POLICY AND PROCEDURE	Target Date	STATUS
<p>RECOMMENDATION D1: EH should revise policy and procedures to strengthen the effective use of permit revocations so that businesses with chronic unsafe practices are precluded from operating without remediating these conditions.</p>	<p>4/1/2016</p>	<p>In progress. This policy is currently in the internal review process, which includes a review by DPH Human Resources and the labor union, prior to approval.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION D2: EH should assess whether other conditions warrant a minimum time period for closure.</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>After internal discussions, it was determined that the existing closure policy is consistent with State law in protecting public health. As such, we do not recommend changing the closure policy.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION D3: EH proposes to change its internal policy to allow a graded inspection to occur at any time under specified conditions.</p>	<p>4/1/2016</p>	<p>In progress. This policy is currently in the internal review process, which includes a review by DPH Human Resources and the labor union, prior to approval.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION D4: EH should review the owner initiated inspection (OI) process and determine what modifications should be implemented to prevent restaurant operators who have chronic unsafe food practices from using the process to improve their grade. An analysis of EC inspection data related to OI's will assist in determining the factors EH should target for modification.</p>	<p>5/30/2016</p>	<p>In progress. This recommendation will be discussed further with the Food Safety Advisory Council (FSAC) on March 16, 2016. A meeting with representatives of the California Restaurant Association (CRA) to discuss this recommendation further is pending confirmation of the proposed date. A meeting with Environmental Health Directors of surrounding counties is scheduled for February 29, 2016, to continue discussions on this recommendation. After these meetings, DPH will make a final determination. The target date for completion was adjusted to allow time for the additional discussion.</p>